

## Oprah's Picks

Contributed by  
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Special thanks goes to the Wolfner Library for the Blind in Missouri for sharing this bibliography. *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy.

- RC 63649

A father and his young son journey south after the destruction of the civilized world. Their survival kit consists of a few blankets, a pistol, a cart of scavenged food, and their love for each other. Their values are tested by occasional encounters with other desperate survivors. Selected 2007. *The measure of a man* a spiritual autobiography by Sidney Poitier

- RC 50313

The first African American actor to win an Oscar recalls his idyllic childhood in the Bahamas, his move to Florida at age fifteen, his early struggles to establish an acting career, and his later successes. Poitier reflects on the family values, ethics, and integrity that sustain him. Some strong language. Selected 2007. *Night* by Elie Wiesel. Available in: *The Night Trilogy* by Elie Wiesel.

- RC 42074, BR 11185.

*Night* is the story of a Jewish boy who is deported with his family and community from Hungary to the horrors of the infamous Auschwitz. In *Dawn*, Elisha, the sole survivor of his family, becomes a Jewish terrorist in Palestine and is ordered to execute an Englishman. In *The Accident*, a concentration camp survivor tries to rebuild his life in New York City. Some violence and some descriptions of sex. Selected 2006. *A Million Little Pieces* by James Frey.

- RC 56290.

Memoir by a recovering alcoholic and drug addict, whose parents checked him into a Minnesota rehabilitation clinic as a last-step measure when he was twenty-three. Discusses his experiences there, including treatment methods he accepted and rejected to regain sobriety. Strong language. Selected 2005. *The Sound and the Fury* by William Faulkner.

- RC 49885, BR 11402, LP009316.

In 1928 Yoknapatawpha County, Mississippi, the Compson brothers, Quentin, Jason, and the "idiot" son Benjy, narrate events that trace the gradual disintegration of the family and include the ostracism of their wanton sister, Caddy. Selected 2005. *Light in August* by William Faulkner.

- RC 20001, BR 11398.

Joe Christmas, an orphan of mixed blood, travels to the South, seeking a place and people with whom he can belong. But he is soon hardened by white and black bigotry. Selected 2005. *As I Lay Dying* by William Faulkner.

- RC 49008, BR 12386.

The Bundrens, poor whites in Mississippi, face numerous obstacles as they trek across the countryside to deliver their mother's body for burial in her home town. First published in 1930; this edition includes changes made by Noel Polk in 1985 based on the author's notes. Selected 2005. *The Good Earth* by Pearl S. Buck.

- RC 37294, BR 9400.

Pulitzer Prize winning novel by a winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature. Describes the rise of Wang Lung, a poor Chinese peasant. The story begins with his wedding day, as he ponders his good fortune that now he will have a woman to take over the chore of lighting a fire to heat the water for his bath. With the help and patience of his new wife, O-lan, Wang Lung becomes a rich landowner. Selected 2004. *Anna Karenina* by Leo Tolstoy.

- RC 49499, BR 12695.

In the 1870s in Russia, Anna flaunts convention by having an adulterous affair with Count Vronsky. Preferring the allure of romance to her stifling marriage with Alexis Karenin, Anna's happiness disintegrates as she loses her peace of mind. Originally published in 1877. Selected 2004. *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* by Carson McCullers.

- RC 58532, BR 11395, LP002407.

Deep South, 1930s. John Singer, who is deaf and mute, feels content until his best friend, also mute, is committed to a mental institution. Singer, who can read lips, becomes the confidante of several town residents, all of whom want answers to their problems. Some strong language. Selected 2004. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

- RC 59490, LP011576.

The rise and fall, birth and death, of the mythical town of Macondo, somewhere in Latin America, through characterizations of the Buendia family. The variety of life and the search for peace and truth are universal themes that dominate the novel. Some strong language and some descriptions of sex. Selected 2004. *East of Eden* by John Steinbeck.

- RC 49676, BR 12565, LP002169.

This saga of two California families spans from the post-Civil War era to the end of World War 1. The Trasks, a mixture of gentleness and brutality, contrast with the Hamiltons, the author's own forebears, a well adjusted, more tranquil family. Selected 2003. *Cry, the Beloved Country* by Alan Paton.

- RC 57559, BR 15354, LP000597.

The classic story of Zulu pastor Stephen Kumalo's search for his delinquent son, Absalom, in 1940s Johannesburg, South Africa. Kumalo's experiences are set against a background of a land and people who struggle not only with

overwhelming racial injustice but also with disintegration of their tribal culture and traditional family bonds. Selected 2003. *Fall on Your Knees* by Ann-Marie MacDonald.

- RC 46379, BR 13878, LP016764.

Materia is thirteen when she elopes with the eighteen-year-old piano tuner, James, and her Lebanese-Canadian family disowns her. James claims to be devoted to their first daughter, Kathleen, and they have three more girls as years pass. The four sisters do not mention the family secrets of incest and rape, until an illegitimate child appears on the scene. Selected January 2002. *A Fine Balance* by Rohinton Mistry.

- RC 53004.

In 1975 India, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi has declared a state of emergency, and the resulting upheavals thrust together four struggling people. Dina, a widowed seamstress in her forties, takes in Maneck, the college age son of a school friend, along with two low caste tailors, Ishvar and his nephew Om. Some violence. Selected November 2001. *The Corrections* by Jonathan Franzen.

- RC 53073, BR 13651, LP016455.

Because her husband, Alfred, has Parkinson's disease, elderly midwestern housewife Enid Lambert seeks to gather her grown children for one last Christmas together. But unhappily married banker Gary, recently fired professor Chip, and bisexual chef Denise have other ideas. Strong language and some descriptions of sex. Selected September 2001. *Cane River* by Lalita Tademy.

- RC 52281, LP016136.

Tademy's fictionalized account of her maternal ancestors, from 1834 to the 1950s, begins with her enslaved great-great-great-great-grandmother Elisabeth and continues with three generations of successively lighter descendants. She describes these women's struggles for freedom and justice on a Creole plantation in Cane River, Louisiana. Selected June 2001. *Stolen Lives: Twenty Years in a Desert Jail* by Malika Oufkir and Michele Fitoussi.

- RC 52093, LP016048.

Moroccan woman describes her family's twenty year imprisonment after her father led an unsuccessful coup against the king. Malika recalls her luxurious childhood in the palace; her harsh exile to an abandoned fort with her mother and five siblings; and their escape, recapture, and final release from prison. Selected May 2001. *Icy Sparks* by Gwyn Hyman Rubio.

- RC 49152, LP016143.

Growing up in the 1950s in a small Kentucky town, Icy realizes that she is different from the other kids. She endures alienation at school and a stay in the state hospital while gradually coming to terms with her disorder, Tourette Syndrome. Some strong language. Selected March 2001. *We Were the Mulvaney* by Joyce Carol Oates.

- RC 44100, LP015831.

The Mulvaneys live an idyllic life on their family farm. Then their world is shattered on Valentine's Day in 1976, when daughter Marianne is raped while drinking with a high school classmate. After that, everything comes apart for the once stable and close knit family. Selected January 2001. *House of Sand and Fog* by Andre Dubus III.

- RC 50033, LP016053.

This riveting novel follows three fragile yet determined people, each with competing desires for the same house, doomed by their inability to understand each other. Selected November 2000. *Drowning Ruth* by Christina Schwarz.

- RC 50849, BR 13187, LP015444.

This novel is a stunning portrait of the ties that bind sisters together and the forces that tear them apart, of the dangers of keeping secrets and the explosive repercussions when they are exposed. Selected September 2000. *Open House* by Elizabeth Berg.

- RC 50525, LP015892.

A woman recreates her life after divorce by opening up her house and her heart. Selected August 2000. *The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver.

- RC 46882, BR 11745, LP014495.

An evangelical American clan ventures forth to the Belgian Congo, circa 1959, and is hit with a major case of culture shock. Selected June 2000. *While I Was Gone* by Sue Miller.

- RC 47671, LP015042.

Jo has everything she ever wanted: a successful veterinary practice, a devoted husband, and three grown daughters. But that is before a flirtation that returns her to the darkest moment of her past and imperils all she loves. Selected May 2000. *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison.

- RC 49914, BR 12618, LP015083.

The story of a black girl who prays, with unforeseen consequences, for her eyes to turn blue so she will be accepted. Selected April 2000. *Back Roads* by Tawni O'Dell.

- RC 49314, LP015190.

A novel set among the back roads of Pennsylvania's mining country about a nineteen-year-old boy/man who should be in college and away from his closed minded, stricken coal town, with its lack of jobs and no sense of humor. Instead, his mother is in jail for killing his abusive father, and he is an orphan with the responsibilities of an adult and the fiery, aggressive libido of a teenager. Selected March 2000. *Daughter of Fortune* by Isabel Allende.

- RC 48869.

Set in the mid-1880s, this novel follows the fortunes of Eliza Sommers, Chilean by birth but adopted by a British spinster, Rose Sommers, and her bachelor brother, Jeremy, after she is abandoned on their doorstep. Selected February 2000. *Gap Creek* by Robert Morgan.

- RC 49253.

Julie Harmon, seventeen, can butcher a hog, split a log, and plant a crop; and she watched her brother and father die. When she marries Hank Richards, eighteen, and moves to Gap Creek, South Carolina, she finds some happiness but still faces hard work and sorrow. Selected January 2000. *Map of the World* by Jane Hamilton.

- RC 39001, BR 9800.

A farmer's wife has possibly been responsible for the death of a child. The horrifying events that follow make powerful reading and pose crucial questions about life in the heartland of America. Selected December 1999. *Vinegar Hill* by A. Manette Ansay.

- RC 49824, LP015090.

Ellen Grier and her family return to the rural home of her unhappy in-laws in Wisconsin after her husband, James, loses his job in Illinois. Even after James gets another job, Ellen must cope with her abusive in-laws who dislike her almost as much as they despise each other. The memory of James' long-dead grandmother gives Ellen the courage to rescue herself and her loved ones from despair. Selected November 1999. *River, Cross My Heart* by Breena Clarke.

- RC 48816, LP015063.

This novel takes place in Georgetown in 1925, where a large and close knit African American community took shape beneath the shadow of segregation. At the center of the story is baby Clara, who is swallowed by the Potomac River as her sister, Johnnie Mae, cools off in the brackish water. It is the only place the girls can find relief because they are banned from the new, clean swimming pool the white kids use. Selected October 1999. *Tara Road* by Maeve Binchy.

- RC 47670, LP014476.

This is a tale of two women, one from Ireland, one from America, who switch houses and lives, and in doing so learn much about each other, as well as much about themselves. Selected September 1999. *Mother of Pearl* by Melinda Haynes.

- RC 48529, LP014882.

Twenty-eight-year-old Even Grade is a black man who was orphaned as a child; fifteen-year-old Valuable Korner is a white girl who might as well have been. Petal, Mississippi, circa 1956, seems an unlikely spot for these two to connect, but it soon becomes apparent that a friendship across race lines is just one of many miracles waiting to happen in this small southern town. Selected June 1999. *White Oleander* by Janet Fitch.

- RC 48432, LP014776.

An uncompromising poet, Ingrid despises weakness and self pity, telling her daughter, Astrid, that they are ancestors of Vikings, savages who fought fiercely to survive. And when one of Ingrid's boyfriends abandons her, she illustrates her point, killing the man with the poison of oleander flowers. This leads to a life sentence in prison, leaving Astrid to teach herself the art of survival in a string of Los Angeles foster homes. Selected May 1999. *The Pilot's Wife* by Anita Shreve.

- RC 47832, LP015906.

The news all pilots' wives dread comes and a mystery unfolds as the reader discovers with Kathryn that the man she was married to was not the same one who dies in midair leaving her with a teenage daughter and too many unanswered questions. Selected March 1999. *The Reader* by Bernhard Schlink.

- RC 46772.

A powerful novel of shared guilt and the redemptive power of love, set in postwar Germany. The story revolves around a teenage boy's affair with an older woman and chronicles the devastating secret she has kept from everyone. Selected February 1999. *Jewel* by Bret Lott.

- RC 34438, LP010904.

A forty-year-old woman gives birth to a Down's Syndrome baby and witnesses all the challenges of raising the child in Mississippi in the 1940s. Selected January 1999. *Where the Heart Is* by Billie Letts.

- RC 47380.

Abandoned by her boyfriend at a Wal-Mart in Oklahoma, Novalee Nation, seventeen, and seven months pregnant, soon discovers the treasures hiding in this small southwest town. Selected December 1998. *Midwives* by Chris Bohjalian.

- RC 47250.

A talented midwife is arrested for murder when she saves a baby by performing a Caesarian section on a mother she believes is dead, only to have her assistant insist later that the woman was still very much alive. Told in the mesmerizing voice of the midwife's daughter, the story depicts the aftermath of the tragedy. Selected October 1998. *What Looks Like Crazy on an Ordinary Day* by Pearl Cleage.

- RC 46770, LP014376.

This is a story about a man and a woman who try to free themselves of the limiting circumstances of their lives so that they can love. An HIV positive woman also helps herself see what is real when she helps her sister's dreams come true. Selected September 1998. *I Know This Much Is True* by Wally Lamb.

- RC 46124, LP014654.

A book about brothers and the expectations that family members have about one another; it is also an honest, moving account of one man's search, denial, and acceptance of self. Selected June 1998. *Breath, Eyes, Memory* by Edwidge Danticat.

- RC 46001, BR 9784, LP014288.

The story of a young Haitian woman's coming to terms with her country, her mother, and her own identity. Selected May 1998. *Black and Blue* by Anna Quindlen.

- RC 45715 LP013827.

A stunning novel about a marriage that begins in passion and becomes violent. After she runs away from her abusive husband, Fran Benedetto lives in fear of discovery, yet also with increasing confidence, freedom, and hope, as she struggles to create a new life for herself and her son. Selected April 1998. *Here on Earth* by Alice Hoffman.

- RC 45717 LP013412.

Set in a small Massachusetts town, this novel tells the story of a doomed love affair, a return engagement between long separated former teenaged lovers. Selected March 1998. *Paradise* by Toni Morrison.

- RC 46272 LP013651.

In this powerful novel, four young women are brutally attacked in a convent near an all-black town in America in the 1970s. Morrison covers the subjects of the era: the Civil Rights movement, the Vietnam War, the counter-culture, and generational conflict. Selected January 1998. *The Best Way to Play* by Bill Cosby.

- RC 45511.

When the TV show *Space Explorers* announces its video game, Little Bill and his friends pester their parents to buy it. Andrew shares the video with his friends. To the children's surprise, however, they prefer their own version of the game, which they play in a vacant lot. Selected December 1997. *The Treasure Hunt* by Bill Cosby.

- RC 45513.

At home on a rainy day, everyone in Little Bill's family finds something to do, except him. His great-grandmother comes to Little Bill's room and together they discover his special talent. Selected December 1997. *The Meanest Thing to Say* by Bill Cosby.

- RC 45512.

Michael, a new boy in the second grade, wants to play a game to see who can say the meanest thing. Little Bill's dad gives him an idea of how to turn the game around, and Little Bill makes friends with Michael. Selected December 1997. *Ellen Foster* by Kaye Gibbons.

- RC 44846.

A real survivor, eleven-year-old Ellen Foster tells of her daily troubled life in a family full of trauma. Both Ellen Foster and Ruby Pitt Woodrow of *A Virtuous Woman* (RC 44845) are damaged people who find the love that they both need to heal. Selected October 1997. *A Virtuous Woman* by Kaye Gibbons.

- RC 44845, LP012462.

In this novella, twenty-year-old Ruby meets forty-year-old tenant farmer Jack Stokes and lets him take care of her, discovering that love is sometimes wrapped in plain everyday paper. Selected October 1997. *A Lesson before Dying* by Ernest J. Gaines.

- RC 36694, LP012001.

African American teacher, Grant Wiggins, trapped in a career he does not enjoy, resentful at his station in life, and angered by the injustice all around him in the 1940s Louisiana town he inhabits promises Miss Emma to teach her grandson, convicted of murder and on death row, to die like a man. Both learn lessons from each other that neither knew could be taught. Selected September 1997. *Songs in Ordinary Time* by Mary McGarry Morris.

- RC 44955.

This novel captures 1960 small town life and the household of an overworked single mom during the summer the family deals with a con man. Selected June 1997. *The Heart of a Woman* by Maya Angelou.

- RC 17325, LP014787.

This novel describes one of the most exciting and formative periods of Angelou's amazing life: her beginnings as a writer and an activist in New York. Selected May 1997. *The Rapture of Canaan* by Sheri Reynolds.

- RC 44391.

This coming of age novel centers on fourteen-year-old Ninah Huff and her prayer partner, fifteen-year-old James, and the consequences of their love affair for both them and the strict religious community in which they live. Selected April 1997. *Stones from the River* by Ursula Hegi.

- RC 38888.

Trudi, born in Germany in 1915, is a Zwerg or dwarf. After her troubled mother dies, Trudi lives with her beloved father, helping in his library and learning the stories of the townspeople. She has friends, but her role in the town is shaped by the hidden or blatant disgust she generates in some. As a child Trudi strikes back, but later, working against Hitler's regime, Trudi learns to belong: to initiate, build, and be. Some violence. Selected February 1997. *She's Come Undone* by Wally Lamb.

- RC 36063, LP013215.

By the time thirteen-year-old Dolores Price is raped by her neighbor, she is already disillusioned by her father's desertion, her mother's breakdown, and a hostile reception at school. Dolores retreats into food and television until guilt over another tragedy forces her to reenter the world as an obese college student and start the long path to recovery. Strong language, some violence, and explicit descriptions of sex. Selected January 1997. *The Book of Ruth* by Jane Hamilton.

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RC 29464, LP013048.

Narrated by Ruth, a young woman living in rural Illinois, this is a story of the survival of the poor and undereducated. Ruth still lives at home with her mother after marrying Ruby, who is a pleasant, but slightly odd young man. The relationship between the three adults demonstrates that familiarity can breed even more than contempt, and the household erupts in violence. Some strong language and some descriptions of sex. Selected November 1996. *Song of Solomon* by Toni Morrison.

- RC 38330, BR 9632.

Macon Dead III, known as Milkman, is the first black baby allowed to be born in Mercy Hospital in the 1930s. Milkman undertakes an epic journey into an understanding of his family's heritage and, hence, himself. Strong language and descriptions of sex. Selected November 1996. *The Deep End of the Ocean* by Jacquelyn Mitchard.

- RC 42874, LP014998.

While on a trip to Chicago with her three young children, a woman briefly turns away from her three-year-old son in a hotel lobby. The child vanishes, leaving his family anguished and splintered. Nine years later, some hope is rekindled when a familiar looking boy shows up at their house. Strong language and some descriptions of sex. Selected September 1996.